

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended): A recombinant microorganism comprising:  
a heterologous polynucleotide that encodes a heterologous protein or polypeptide, and  
from which

one or more of the following genes have been deleted or knocked-out *comA*, *yopO*,  
*treR*, *yvba*, *cspB*, *yvAN*, *yttP*, *yurK*, *yoZA*, *licR*, *sigL*, *mntR*, *glcT*, *yvdE*, *ykvE*, *rocR*, *ccpA*,  
*yaaT*, *yaaA*, *yyCH*, *yacP*, *hprK*, *rsiX*, *yhdK*, and *ylbO*.

2. (Previously Presented): The recombinant microorganism of claim 1, wherein the  
microorganism is *Bacillus subtilis*.

3. (Previously Presented): The recombinant microorganism of claim 1, wherein one  
or more regions selected from among a transcription initiation regulatory region, a translation  
initiation regulatory region, and a secretion signal region is ligated to an upstream region of a  
gene encoding a heterologous protein or polypeptide.

4. (Previously Presented): The recombinant microorganism of claim 3, wherein the  
one or more regions are three regions constituted by a transcription initiation regulatory  
region, a translation initiation regulatory region, and a secretion signal region.

5. (Previously Presented): The recombinant microorganism of claim 3, wherein the  
secretion signal region is derived from a cellulase gene of a bacterium belonging to the genus  
*Bacillus* and the transcription initiation regulatory region and the translation initiation  
regulatory region are each derived from a 0.6 to 1 kb region upstream of the cellulase gene.

6. (Previously Presented): The recombinant microorganism of claim 4, wherein the three regions constituted by the transcription initiation regulatory region, the translation initiation regulatory region, and the secretion signal region are a nucleotide sequence of base numbers 1 to 659 of a cellulase gene of SEQ ID NO: 1; a nucleotide sequence of base numbers 1 to 696 of a cellulase gene of SEQ ID NO: 3; a DNA fragment having a nucleotide sequence having 70% homology with either of these nucleotide sequences; or a DNA fragment having a nucleotide sequence lacking a portion of any one of these nucleotide sequences.

7. (Previously Presented): A method for producing a protein or polypeptide comprising:

growing or culturing the recombinant microorganism of claim 1 for a time and under conditions suitable for expression of said heterologous protein or polypeptide, and recovering said heterologous protein or polypeptide.

8. (Previously Presented): A recombinant microorganism that is *Bacillus* comprising a heterologous polynucleotide that encodes a heterologous protein or polypeptide, wherein said microorganism has one or more of the following *Bacillus* genes deleted or knocked-out *comA*, *yopO*, *treR*, *yvbA*, *cspB*, *yvAN*, *yttP*, *yurK*, *yoZA*, *licR*, *sigL*, *mntR*, *glcT*, *yvdE*, *ykvE*, *rocR*, *ccpA*, *yaaT*, *yyaA*, *yyCH*, *yacP*, *hprK*, *rsiX*, *yhdK*, and *ylbO*.

9 (Previously Presented): The microorganism of claim 8 which is *Bacillus subtilis* having one or more *Bacillus subtilis* genes selected from the group consisting of *comA*, *yopO*,

*treR, yvbA, cspB, yvaN, yttP, yurK, yozA, licR, sigL, mntR, glcT, yvdE, ykvE, rocR, ccpA, yaaT, yyaA, yycH, yacP, hprK, rsiX, yhdK, and ylbO* deleted or knocked-out.

10. (Previously Presented): The recombinant microorganism of claim 9 from which *rocR* has been deleted or its expression knocked out.

11. (Previously Presented): The recombinant microorganism of claim 9 from which *sigL* has been deleted or its expression knocked out.

12. (Previously Presented): A method for producing a protein or polypeptide comprising:

growing or culturing the recombinant microorganism of claim 8 for a time and under conditions suitable for expression of said heterologous protein or polypeptide, and recovering said heterologous protein or polypeptide.

13. (Previously Presented): A method for producing a protein or polypeptide comprising:

growing or culturing the recombinant microorganism of claim 9 for a time and under conditions suitable for expression of said heterologous protein or polypeptide, and recovering said heterologous protein or polypeptide.

14. (Previously Presented): A method for producing a protein or polypeptide comprising:

growing or culturing the recombinant microorganism of claim 10 for a time and under conditions suitable for expression of said heterologous protein or polypeptide, and

recovering said heterologous protein or polypeptide.

15. (Previously Presented): A method for producing a protein or polypeptide comprising:

growing or culturing the recombinant microorganism of claim 11 for a time and under conditions suitable for expression of said heterologous protein or polypeptide, and

recovering said heterologous protein or polypeptide.